Rosicrucian and Masonic Origins

by Manly P. Hall

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FREEMASONRY is a fraternity within a fraternity—an outer organization concealing an inner

brotherhood of the elect. Before it is possible to intelligently discuss the origin of the Craft, it is necessary, therefore, to establish the existence of these two separate yet interdependent orders, the one visible and the other invisible. The visible society is a splendid camaraderie of "free and accepted" men enjoined to devote themselves to ethical, educational, fraternal, patriotic, and humanitarian concerns. The invisible society is a secret and most august fraternity whose members are dedicated to the service of a mysterious arcanum arcanomm.Those Brethren who have essayed to write the history of their Craft have not included in their disquisitions the story of that truly secret inner society which is to the body Freemasonic what the heart is to the body human.In each generation only a few are accepted into the inner sanctuary of the Work, but these are veritable Princes of the Truth and their sainted names shall be remembered in future ages together with the seers and prophets of the elder world. Though the great initiate-philosophers of Freemasonry can be counted upon one's fingers, yet their power is not to be measured by the achievements of ordinary men. They are dwellers upon the Threshold of the Innermost, Masters of that secret doctrine which forms the invisible foundation of every great theological and rational institution.

The outer history of the Masonic order is one of noble endeavor, altruism, and splendid enterprise; the inner history, one of silent conquest, persecution, and heroic martyrdom. The body of Masonry

rose from the guilds of workmen who wandered the face of medieval Europe, but the spirit of Masonry walked with God before the universe was spread out or the scroll of the heavens unrolled. The enthusiasm of the young Mason is the effervescence of a pardonable pride. Let him extol the

merits of his Craft, reciting its steady growth, its fraternal spirit, and its worthy undertakings. Let him boast of splendid buildings and an ever-increasing sphere of influence. These are the tangible evidence of power and should rightly set a-flutter the heart of the Apprentice who does not fiiUy comprehend as yet that great strength which abides in silence or that unutterable dignity to be sensed only by those who. have been "raised" into the contemplation of the Inner Mystery, [p 398]

An obstacle well-nigh insurmountable is to convince the Mason himself that the secrets of his Craft are worthy of his profound consideration. As St. Paul, so we are told, kicked against the "pricks" of conversion, so the rank and file of present-day Masons strenuously oppose any effort put forth to interpret Masonic symbols in the light of philosophy. They are seemingly obsessed by the fear that from their ritualism may be extracted a meaning more profound than is actually contained therein. For years it has been a mooted question whether Freemasonry is actually a religious organization. "Masonry," writes Pike, however, in the Legendafor the Nineteenth Degree, "has and always had a religious creed. It teaches what it deems to be the truth in respect to the nature and attributes of God." The more studiously-minded Mason regards the Craft as an aggregation of thinkers concerned with the deeper mysteries of life. The all-too-prominent younger members of the Fraternity, however, if not openly skeptical, are at least indifferent to these weightier issues. The champions of philosophic Masonry, alas, are a weak, small voice which grows weaker and smaller as time goes by. In fact, there are actual blocs among the Brethren who would divorce Masonry from both philosophy and religion at any and all cost. If, however, we search the writings of eminent Masons ,we find a unanimity of viewpoint: namely, that Masonry is a religious and philosophic body. Every effort initiated to elevate Masonic thought to its true position has thus invariably emphasized the metaphysical and ethical aspects of the Craft.

But a superficial perusal of available documents will demonstrate that the modem Masonic order is not united respecting the true purpose for its own existence. Nor will this factor of doubt be dispelled until the origin of the Craft is established beyond all quibbling. The elements of Masonic history are strangely elusive; there are gaps which apparently cannot be bridged. "Who the early Freemasons really were," states Gould in A Concise History

of Freemasonry, "and whence they came, may afford a tempting theme for inquiry to the speculative antiquary. But it is enveloped in

obscurity, and lies far outside the domain of authentic history." Between modem Freemasonry

with its vast body of ancient symbolism and those original Mysteries which first employed these symbols there is a dark interval of centuries. To the conservative Masonic historian, the deductions of such writers as Higgins, Churchward, Vail, and Waite—though ingenious and fascinating-actually prove nothing. That Masonry is a body of ancient lore is self-evident, but the tangible "link" necessary to convince the recalcitrant Brethren that their order is the direct successor of the pagan Mysteries has unfortunately not been adduced to date. Of such problems as these is composed the "angel" with which the Masonic Jacob must wrestle throughout the night, [pp 398-399]

It is possible to trace Masonry back a few centuries with comparative ease, but then the thread suddenly vanishes from sight in a maze of secret societies and political enterprises. Dimly silhouetted in the mists that becloud these tangled issues are such figures as Cagliostro, Comte de St.-Germain, and St. Martin, but even the connection between these individuals and the Craft has never been clearly defined. The writings of early Masonic history is involved in such obvious hazard as to provoke the widespread conclusion that further search is futile. The average Masonic student is content, therefore, to trace his Craft back to the workmen's guilds who chipped and chiselled the cathedrals and public buildings of medieval Europe. While such men as Albert Pike have realized this attitude to be ridiculous, it is one thing to declare it insufficient and quite another to prove the fallacy to an adamantine mind. So much has been lot and forgotten, so much ruled in and out by those unfitted for such legislative revision that the modern rituals do not in every case represent the original rites of the Craft. In his Symbolism, Pike (who spent a lifetime in the quest for Masonic secrets) declares that few of the original meanings of the symbols are known to the modem order, nearly all the so-called interpretations now given being superficial. Pike confessed that the original meanings of the very symbols he himself was attempting to interpret were irretrievablylost;

that even such familiar emblems as the apron and the pillars were locked mysteries, whose "keys" had been thrown away by the uninformed. "The initiated," also writes John Fellows, "as well as those without the pale of the order, are equally ignorant of their derivation and import. (See The Mysteries of Freemasonry.)

Preston, Gould, Mackey, Oliver, and Pike—in fact, nearly every great historian of Freemasonryhave all admitted the possibility of the modem society being connected, indirectly at least, with the

ancient Mysteries, and their descriptions of the modern society are prefaced by excerpts from ancient writings descriptive of primitive ceremonials. These eminent Masonic scholars have all recognized in the legend of Hiram Abiff an adaptation of the Osiris myth; nor do they deny that the major part of the symbolism of the craft is derived from the pagan institutions of antiquity when the gods were venerated in secret places with strange figures and appropriate rituals. Though cognizant of the exalted origin of their order, these historians-either through fear or uncertainty-have failed, however, to drive home the one point necessary to estabhsh the true purpose of Freemasonry: They did not realize that the Mysteries whose rituals Freemasonry perpetuates were the custodians of a secret philosophy of life of such transcendent nature that it can only be entrusted to an individual tested and proved beyond all peradventure of human frailty. The secret schools of Greece and Egypt were neither fraternal nor poUtical fundamentally, nor were their ideals similar to those of the modern Craft. They were essentially philosophic and religious institutions, and all admitted into them were consecrated to the service of the sovereign good. Modern Freemasons, however, regard their Craft primarily as neither philosophic nor religious, but rather as ethical. Strange as it may seem, the majority openly ridicule the very supernatural powers and agencies for which their sjmibols stand.

The secret doctrine that flows through Freemasonic symbols (and to whose perpetuation the invisible Masonic body is consecrated) has its source in three ancient and exalted orders. The first is the Dionysiac artificers, the second the Roman collegia, and the third the Arabian Rosicrucians. The

Dionysians were the master builders of the ancient world. Originally founded to design and

erect the theaters of Dionysos wherein were enacted the tragic dramas of the rituals, this order was repeatedly elevated by popular acclaim to greater dignity until at last it was entrusted with the planning and construction of all public edifices concerned with the commonwealth or the worship of the gods and heroes. Hiram, King of Tyre, was the patron of the Dionysians, who flourished in Tyre and Sidon, and Hiram Abiff (if we may believe the sacred account) was himself a Grand Master of this most noble order of pagan builders. King Solomon in his wisdom accepted the services of this famous craftsman, and thus at the instigation of Hiram, King of Tyre, Hiram Abiff, though himself a member of a different faith, journeyed from his own country to design and supervise the erection of the Everlasting House to the true God on Mount Moriah. The tools of the builders' craft were first employed by the Dionysians as symbols under which to conceal the mysteries of the soul and the secrets of human regeneration. The Dionysians also first likened man to a rough ashlar which, trued into a finished block through the instrument of reason, could be fitted into the structure of that living and eternal Temple built without the sound of hammer, the voice of workmen or any tool of contention, [pp 400-401]

The Roman collegia was a branch of the Dionysiacs and to it belonged those initiated artisans who fashioned the impressive monuments whose ruins still lend their immortal glory to the Eternal City.

In his Ten Books on Architecture, Vitruvius, the initiate of the collegia, has revealed that which was permissible concerning the secrets of his holy order. Of the inner mysteries, however, he could not write, for these were reserved for such as had donned the leather apron of the craft. In his consideration of the books now available concerning the Mysteries, the thoughtful reader should note the following words appearing in a twelfth-century volume entitled Artephil Liber Secretus: "Is not this an art full of secrets? And believest thou, O fool! that we plainly teach this Secret of Secrets, taking our words according to their literal interpretation?" (See Sephar H' Debarim.) Into the stones they trued, the adepts of the collegia deeply carved their Gnostic symbols. From earliest times, the initiated

stonecutters marked their perfected works with the secret emblems of their crafts and degrees that unborn generations might realize that the master builders of the first ages also labored for the same ends sought by men today, [p 402]

The Mysteries of Egypt and Persia that had found a haven in the Arabian desert reached Europe by way of the Knights Templars and the Rosicrucians. The Temple of the Rose Cross at Damascus had preserved the secret philosophy of Sharon's Rose; the Druses of the Lebanon still retain the mysticism of ancient Syria; and the dervishes, as they lean on their carved and crotched sticks, still meditate upon the secret instruction perpetuated from the days of the four Caliphs. From the far places of Irak and the hidden retreats of the Sufi mystics, the Ancient Wisdom thus found its way into Europe. Was Jacques de Mo lay burned by the Holy Inquisition merely because he wore the red cross of the Templar? What were those secrets to which he was true even in death? Did his companion Knights perish with him merely because they had amassed a fortune and exercised an unusual degree of temporal power? To the thoughtless, these may constitute ample grounds, but to those who can pierce the film of the specious and the superficial, they are assuredly insufficient. It was not the physical power of the Templars but the knowledge which they had brought with them from the East that the church feared. The Templars had discovered part of the Great Arcanum; they had become wise in those mysteries which had been celebrated in Mecca thousands of years before theadvent of Mohammed; they had read a few pages from the dread book of filethe Anthropos, and for this knowledge they were doomed to die. What was the black magic of which the Templars were accused? What was Baphomet, the Goat of Mendes, whose mysteries they were declared to have celebrated? All these are questions worthy of the thoughtful consideration of every studious Mason.

Truth is eternal. The so-called revelations of Truth that come in different religions are actually but a re-emphasis of an ever-existing doctrine. Thus Moses did not originate a new religion for Israel; he simply adapted the Mysteries of Egypt to the needs of Israel. The ark triumphantly borne by the

twelve tribes through the wilderness was copied after the Isiac ark which may still be traced in faint

has-relief upon the ruins of the Temple of Philae. Even the two brooding cherubim over the mercy seat are visible in the Egyptian-carving, furnishing indubitable evidence that the secret doctrine of Egypt was the prototype of Israel's mystery religion. In his reformation of Indian philosophy, Buddha likewise did not reject the esotericism of the Brahmins, but rather adapted this esotericism to the needs of the masses in India. The mystic secrets locked within the holy Vedas were thus disclosed in order that all men, irrespective of castely distinction, might partake of wisdom and share in a common heritage of good. Jesus was a Rabbin of the Jews, a teacher of the Holy Law, who discoursed in the synagogue, interpreting the Torah according to the teachings of His sect. He brought no new message nor were His reformations radical. He merely tore away the veil from the temple in order that not only Pharisee and Sadducee but also publican and sinner might together behold the glory of an ageless faith, [pp 402-403]

In his cavern on Mount Hira, Mohammed prayed not for new truths but for old truths to be restated in their original purity and simplicity in order that men might understand again that primitive religion: God's clear revelation to the first patriarchs. The Mysteries of Islam had been celebrated in the great black cube of the Caaba centuries before the holy pilgrimage. The Prophet was but the reformer of a decadent pagandom, the smasher of idols, the purifier of defiled Mysteries. The dervishes, who patterned their garments-after those of the Prophet, still preserve that inner teaching of the elect, and for them the Axis of the Earth --thesupreme hierophant-still sits, visible only to the faithfiil, in meditation upon the flat roof of the Caaba. Neither carpenter nor camel-driver, as Abdul Baha might have said, can fashion a world religion from the substances of his own mind. Neither prophet nor savior preached a doctrine which was his own, but in language suitable to his time and race retold that Ancient Wisdom preserved within the Mysteries since the dawning of human consciousness. So with the Masonic Mysteries of today. Each Mason has at hand those lofty principles of universal order upon whose certainties the faiths of mankind, have ever been established. Each Mason has at hand those lofty principles of universal order upon pregnant with life and hope to those millions who wander in the

darkness of unenlightenment. [p 403] Father C. R. C, the Master of the Rose Cross, was initiated into the Great Work at Damcar. Later at Fez, fiirther information was given him relating to the sorcery of the Arabians. From these wizards of the desert C. R. C. also secured the sacred book M, which is declared to have contained the accumulated knowledge of the world. This volume was translated into Latin by C. R. C. for the edification of his order, but only the initiates know the present hidden repository of the Rosicrucian manuscripts, charters, and manifestos. From the Arabians C. R. C. also learned of the elemental peoples and how, with their aid, it was possible to gain admission to the ethereal world where dwelt the genii and Nature spirits. C.R.C. thus discovered that the magical creatures of the Arabian Nights Entertainment actually existed, though invisible to the ordinary mortal. From astrologers living in the desert far from the concourse of the market-place he was further instructed concerning the mysteries of the stars, the virtues resident in the astral light, the rituals of magic and invocation, the preparation of therapeutic talismans, and the binding of the genii. C. R. C. became an adept n the gathering of medicinal herbs, the transmutation of metals, and the manufacture of precious gems by artificial means. Even the secret of the Elixir of Life and the Universal Panacea were communicated to him. Enriched thus beyond the dreams of Croesus, the Holy Master returned to Europe and there established a House of Wisdom which he called Domus Sancti Spiritus. This house he enveloped in clouds, it is said, so that men could not discover it. What are these "clouds," however, but the rituals and symbols under which is concealed the Great Arcanum-that unspeakable mystery which every true Mason must seek if he would become in reality a "Prince of the Royal Secret"? Paracelsus, the Swiss Hermes, was initiated into the secrets of alchemy in Constantinople and there beheld the consummation of the magnum opus. He is consequently entitled to be mentioned among those initiated by the Arabians into the Rosicrucian work. Cagliostro was also initiated by the Arabians and, because of the knowledge he had thus secured, incurred the displeasure of the Holy See. From the unprobed depths of Arabian Rosicrucianism also issued the illustrious Comte de St.-Germain,

over whose Masonic activities to this day hangs the veil of impenetrable mystery. The exalted body

of initiates whom he represented, as well as the mission he came to accomplish, have both been concealed from the members of the Craft at large and are apparent only to those few discerning Masons who sense the supernal philosophic destiny of their Fraternity, [p 405]

The modem Masonic order can be traced back to a period in European history famous for its intrigue both political and sociological. Between the years 1600 and 1800, mysterious agents moved across the face of the Continent. The forerunner of modern thought was beginning to make its appearance and all Europe was passing through the throes of internal dissension and reconstruction. Democracy was in its infancy, yet its potential power was already being felt. Thrones were beginning to totter. The aristocracy of Europe was like the old man on Sinbad's back: it was becoming more unbearable with every passing day. Although upon the surface national governments were seemingly able to cope with the situation, there was a definite undercurrent of impending change; and out of the masses, long patient under the yoke of oppression, were rising up the champions of religious, philosophic, and poUtical liberty. These led the factions of the dissatisfied: people with legitimate grievances against the intolerance of the church and the oppression of the crown. Out of this struggle for expression materialized certain definite ideals, the same which have now come to be considered peculiarly Masonic.

The divine prerogatives of humanity were being crushed out by the three great powers of ignorance, superstition, and fear—ignorance, the power of the mob; fear, the power of the despot; and superstition, the power of the church. Between the thinker and personal liberty loomed the three "ruffians" or personifications of impediment-the torch, the crown, and the tiara. Brute force, kingly power, and ecclesiastical persuasion became the agents of a great oppression, the motive of a deep unrest, the deterrent to aU progress. It was unlawful to think, well-nigh fatal to philosophize, rank heresy to doubt. To question the infallibility of the existing order was to invite the persecution of the church and the state. These together incited the populace, which thereupon played the r61e of executioner for these arch-enemies of human Uberty. Thus the ideal of democracy assumed a definite form during these stormy periods of European history. This democracy was not only a vision but a retrospection, not only a looking forward but a

gazing backward upon better days and the effort to project those better days into the unborn tomorrow. The ethical, political, and philosophical institutions of antiquity with their constructive effect upon the whole structure of the state were noble examples of possible conditions. It became the dream of the oppressed, consequently, to re-establish a golden age upon the earth, an age where the thinker could think in safety and the dreamer dream in peace; when the wise should lead and the simple follow, yet all dwell together in fraternity and industry, [pp 405-406]

During this period several books were in circulation which, to a certain degree, registered the pulse of the time. One of these documents—More's Utopia—was the picture of a new age when heavenly conditions should prevail upon the earth. This ideal of establishing good in the world savored of blasphemy, however, for in that day heaven alone it was assumed could be good. Men did not seek to establish heavenly conditions upon earth, but rather earthly conditions in heaven. According to popular concept, the more the individual suffered the torments of the damned upon earth, the more he would enjoy the blessedness of heaven. Life was a period of chastisement and earthly happiness an unattainable mirage. More's Utopia thus came as a definite blow to autocratic pretensions and attitudes, giving impulse to the material emphasis which was to follow in succeeding centuries.

Another prominent figure of this period was Sir Walter Raleigh, who paid with his life for high treason against the crown. Raleigh was tried and, though the charge was never proved, was executed. Before Raleigh went to trial, it was known that he must die and that no defense could save him His treason against the crown was of a character very different, however, from that which history records. Raleigh was a member of a secret society or body of men who were already moving

irresistibly forward under the banner of democracy, and for that affiliation he died a felon's death.

The actual reason for Raleigh's death sentence was his refusal to reveal the identity either of that great pohtical organization of which he was a member or his confreres who were fighting the dogma of faith and the divine right of kings. On the title page of the first edition of Raleigh's History of the World, we accordingly find a mass of intricate emblems framed between

two great columns. When the executioner sealed his lips forever, Raleigh's silence, while it added to the discomfiture of his persecutors, assured the safety of his colleagues, [pp 406-407]

One of the truly great minds of that secret fraternity—in fact, the moving spirit of the whole enterprise-was Sir Francis Bacon, whose prophecy of the coming age forms the theme of his New Atlantis and whose vision of the reformation of knowledge finds expression in the Novum Organum Scientiarum, the new organ of science or thought. In the engraving at the beginning of the latter volume may be seen the little ship of progressivism sailing out between the Pillars of Galen and Avicenna, venturing forth beyond the imaginary pillars of church and state upon the unknown sea of human liberty. It is significant that Bacon was appointed by the British Crown to protect its interests in the new American Colonies beyond the sea. We find him writing of this new land, dreaming of the day when a new world and a new government of the philosophic elect should be established there, and scheming to consummate that end when the time should be ripe. Upon the title page of the 1640 edition of Bacon's Advancement of Learning is a Latin motto to the effect that he was the third great mind since Plato. Bacon was a member of the same group to which Sir Walter Raleigh belonged, but Bacon's position as Lord High Chancellor protected him from Raleigh's fate. Every effort was made, however, to humiliate and discredit him. At last, in the sixty-sixth year of his life, having completed the work which held him in England, Bacon feigned death and passed over into Germany, there to guide the destinies of his philosophic and pohtical fraternity for nearly twenty-five years before his actual demise.

Other notable characters of the period are Montaigne, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, and the great Franz Joseph of Transylvania—the latter one of the most important as well as active figures in all this drama, a man who ceased fighting Austria to retire into a monastery in Transylvania from which to direct the activities of his secret society. One political upheaval followed another, the grand climax of this political unrest culminating in the French Revolution, which was directly precipitated by the attacks upon the person of Alessandro CagUostro. The "divine" Cagliostro, by far the most picturesque character of the time, has the distinction of being more maligned than any other person of history. Tried by the Inquisition for

founding a Masonic lodge in the city of Rome, Cagliostro was sentenced to die, a sentence later commuted by the Pope to life imprisonment in the old castle of San Leo. Shortly after his incarceration, Cagliostro disappeared and the story was circulated that he had been strangled in an attempt to escape from prison. In reaUty, however, he was liberated and returned to his Masters in the East. But CagUostro-the idol of France, surnamed "the Father of the Poor," who never received anything from anyone and gave everything to everyone—was most adequately revenged. Though the people little understood this inexhaustible pitcher of bounty which poured forth benefits and never required replenishment, they remembered him in the day of their power, [pp 407-408]

Cagliostro founded the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry, which received into its mysteries many of the French nobility and was regarded favorably by the most learned minds of Europe. Having estabhshed the Egyptian Rite, Caghostro declared himself to be an agent of the order of the Knights Templars and to have received initiation from them on the Isle of Malta. (See Morals and Dogma, in which Albert Pike quotes Eliphas Levi on Cagliostro's affiliation with the Templars.) Called upon the carpet by the Supreme Council of France, it was demanded of Cagliostro that he prove by what authority he had founded a Masonic lodge in Paris independent of the Grand Orient. Of such surpassing mentality was Cagliostro that the Supreme Council found it difficult to secure an advocate qualified to discuss with Cagliostro philosophic Masonry and the ancient Mysteries he

claimed to represent. The Court de Gebelin~the greatest Egyptologist of his day and an authority on

ancient philosophies-was chosen as the outstanding scholar. A time was set and the Brethren convened. Attired in an Oriental coat and a pair of violet-colored breeches, Cagliostro was haled before this council of his peers. The Court de Gebelin asked three questions and then sat down, admitting himself disqualified to interrogate a man so much his superior in every branch of learning. Cagliostro then took the floor, reveaUng to the assembled Masons not only his personal qualifications, but prophesying the future of France. He foretold the fall of the French throne, the Reign of Terror, and the fall of the Bastille. At a later time he revealed the dates of

the death of Marie Antoinette and the King, and also the advent of Napoleon. Having finished his address, Cagliostro made a spectacular exit, leaving the French Masonic lodge in consternation and utterly incapable of coping with the profundity of his reasoning. Though no longer regarded as a ritual in Freemasonry, the Egyptian Rite is available and all who read it will recognize its author to have been no more a charlatan than was Plato, [pp 408-409]

Then appears that charming "first American gentleman," Dr. Benjamin Franklin, who together with the Marquis de Lafayette, played an important role in this drama of empires. While in France, Dr. Franklin was privileged to receive definite esoteric instruction. It is noteworthy that Franklin was the first in America to reprint Anderson's Constitutions of the Free-Masons, which is a most prized work on the subject, though its accuracy is disputed. Through all this stormy period, these impressive figures come and go, part of a definite organiz:ation of political and religious thought--a functioning body of philosophers represented in Spain by no less an individual than Cervantes, in France by Cagliostro and St.-Germain, in Germany by Gichtel and Andreae, in England by Bacon, More, and Raleigh, and in America by Washington and Franklin. Coincident with the Baconian agitation in England, the Fama Fraternitatis and Confessio Fraternitatis appeared in Germany, both of these works being contributions to the establishment of a philosophic government upon the earth. One of the outstanding links between the Rosicrucian Mysteries of the Middle Ages and modern Masonry is Elias Ashmole, the historian of the Order of the Garter and the first Englishman to compile the alchemical writings of the English chemists.

The foregoing may seem to be a useless recital of inanities, but its purpose is to impress upon the reader's mind the philosophical and political situation in Europe at the time of the inception of the Masonic order. A philosophic clan, as it were, which had moved across the face of Europe under such names as the "lUuminati" and the "Rosicrucians," had undermined in a subtle manner the entire structure of regal and sacerdotal supremacy. The founders of Freemasonry were all men who were more or less identified with the progressive tendencies of their day. Mystics, philosophers, and alchemists were aU bound together with a secret tie and dedicated to the

emancipation of humanity from ignorance and oppression. In my researches among ancient books and manuscripts, I have pieced together a little story of probabilities which has a direct bearing upon the subject. Long before the establishment of Freemasonry as a iratemity, a group of mystics founded in Europe what was called the "Society of Unknown Philosophers." Prominent among the profound thinkers who formed the membership of this society were the alchemists, who were engaged in transmuting the political and religious "base metal" of Europe into ethical and spiritual "gold"; the Qabbalists who, as investigators of the superior orders of Nature, sought to discover a stable foundation for human government; and lastly the astrologers who, from a study of the procession of the heavenly bodies, hoped to find therein the rational archetype for all mundane procedure. Here and there is to be found a character who contacted this society. By some it is believed that both Martin Luther and also that great mystic, Philip Melanchthon, were connected with it. The first edition of the King James Bible, Bible, which was edited by Francis Bacon and prepared under Masonic supervision, bears more Mason's marks than the Cathedral of Strasburg. The same is true respecting the Masonic symbolism found in the first Enghsh edition of Josephus' History of the Jews, [pp 409-410]

For some time, the Society of Unknown Philosophers moved extraneous to the church. Among the

fathers of the church, however, were a great number of scholarly and intelligent men who were

keenly interested in philosophy and ethics, prominent among them being the Jesuit Father, Athanasius Kircher, who is recognized as one of the great scholars of his day. Both a Rosicrucian and also a member of the Society of Unknown Philosophers, as revealed by the cryptograms in his writings, Kircher was in harmony with this program of philosophic reconstruction. Since learning was largely limited to churchmen, this body of philosophers soon developed an overwhelming preponderance of ecclesiastics in its membership. The original anti-ecclesiastical ideals of the society were thus speedily reduced to an innocuous state and the organization gradually converted into an actual auxiliary of the church. A small portion of the membership, however, ever maintained an aloofness from the literati of the

faith, for it represented an unorthodox class—the alchemists, Rosicrucians, Qabbalists, and magicians. This latter group accordingly retired from the outer body of the society that had thus come to be known as the "Order of the Golden and Rose Cross" and whose adepts were elevated to the dignity of Knights of the Golden Stone. Upon the withdrawal of these initiated adepts, a powerful clerical body remained which possessed considerable of the ancient lore but in many instances lacked the "keys" by which this symbolism could be interpreted. As this body continued to increase in temporal power, its philosophical power grew correspondingly less, [pp 410-411]

The smaller group of adepts that had withdrawn from the order remained inactive apparently, having retired to what they termed the "House of the Holy Spirit," where they were enveloped by certain "mists" impenetrable to the eyes of the profane. Among these reclusive adepts must be included such well-known Rosicrucians as Robert Fludd, Eugenius Philalethes, John Heydon, Michael Maier, and Henri Khunrath. These adepts in their retirement constituted a loosely organized society which, though lacking the solidarity of a definite fraternity, occasionally initiated a candidate and met annually at a specified place. It was the Comte de Chazal, an initiate of this order, who "raised" Dr. Sigismund Bacstrom while the latter was on the Isle of Mauritius. In due time, the original members of the order passed on, after first entrusting their secrets to carefully chosen successors. In the meantime, a group of men in England, under the leadership of such mystics as Ashmole and Fludd, had resolved upon repopularizing the ancient learning and reclassifying philosophy in accordance with Bacon's plan for a world encyclopedia. These men had undertaken to reconstruct ancient Platonic and Gnostic mysticism, but were unable to attain their objective for lack of information. Elias Ashmole may have been a member of the European order of Rosicrucians and as such evidently knew that in various parts of Europe there were isolated individuals who were in possession of the secret doctrine handed down in unbroken line from the ancient Greeks and Egyptians through Boetius, the early Christian Church, and the Arabians, [p 411]

The efforts of the English group to contact such individuals were evidently successful. Several initiated Rosicrucians were brought from the mainland

to England, where they remained for a considerable time designing the symbolism of Freemasonry and incorporating into the rituals of the order the same divine principles and philosophy that had formed the inner doctrine of all great secret societies from the time of the Eleusinia in Greece. In fact, the Eleusinian Mysteries themselves continued in Christendom until the sixth century after Christ, after which they passed into the custody of the Arabians, as attested by the presence of Masonic symbols and figures upon early Mohammedan monuments. The adepts brought over from the Continent to sit in council with the English philosophers were initiates of the Arabian rites and thus through them the Mysteries were ultimately returned to Christendom. Upon completion of the by-laws of the new fraternity, the initiates retired again into Central Europe, leaving a group of disciples to develop the outer organization, which was to function as a sort of screen to conceal the activities of the esoteric order. Such, in brief, is the story to be pieced together from the fragmentary bits of evidence available. The whole structure of Freemasonry is founded upon the activities of this secret society of Central European adepts; whom the studious Mason will find to be the definite "link" between the modern Craft and the Ancient Wisdom The outer body of Masonic philosophy was merely the veil

of this qabbalistic order whose members were the custodians of the true Arcanum. Does this inner

and secret brotherhood of initiates still exist independent of the Freemasonic order? Evidence points to the fact that it does, for these august adepts are the actual preservers of those secret operative processes of the Greeks whereby the illumination and completion of the individual is effected. They are the veritable guardians of the "Lost Word"~the Keepers of the inner Mystery-and the Mason who searches for and discovers them is rewarded beyond all mortal estimation, [p 412]

In the preface to a book entitled Long-Livers, published in 1772, Eugenius Philalethes, the Rosicrucian initiate, thus addresses his Brethren of the Most Ancient and Most Honorable Fraternity of the Free Masons: "Remember that you are the Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World, and the Fire of the Universe. You are living Stones, built up a Spiritual House, who believe and

rely on the chief Lapis Angularis which the refractory and disobedient Builders disallowed. You are called from Darkness to Light; you are a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood. This makes you, my dear Brethren, fit Companions for the greatest Kings; and no wonder, since the King of Kings hath condescended to make you so to himself, compared to whom the mightiest and most haughty Princes of the Earth are but as Worms, and that not so much as we are all Sons of the same One Eternal Father, by whom all Things were made; but inasmuch as we do the Will of his and our Father which is in Heaven. You see now your high Dignity; you see what you are; act accordingly, and show yourselves (what you are) MEN, and walk worthy the high Profession to which you are called. * * * . Remember, then, what the great End we aU aim at is: Is it not to be happy here and hereafter? For they both depend on each other. The Seeds of that eternal Peace and Tranquillity and everlasting Repose must be sown in this Life; and he that would glorify and enjoy the Sovereign Good then must learn to do it now, and from contemplating the Creature gradually ascend to adore the Creator."

Of all obstacles to surmount in matters of rationality, the most difficult is that of prejudice. Even the casual observer must realize that the true wealth of Freemasonry lies in its mysticism. The average Masonic scholar, however, is fundamentally opposed to a mystical interpretation of his symbols, for he shares the attitude of the modern mind in its general antipathy towards transcendentalism A most significant fact, however, is that those Masons who have won signal honors for their contributions to the Craft have been transcendentaUsts almost without exception. It is quite incredible, moreover, that any initiated Brother, when presented with a copy of Morals and Dogma upon the conferment of his fourteenth degree, can read that volume and yet maintain that his order is not identical with the Mystery Schools of the first ages. Much of the writings of Albert Pike are extracted from the books of the French magician, EUphas Levi, one of the greatest ranscendentaUsts of modem times. Levi was an occultist, a metaphysician, a Platonic philosopher, who by the rituals of magic invoked even the spirit of ApoUonius of Tyana, and yet Pike has inserted in his Morals and Dogma whole pages, and even chapters, practically verbatim. To Pike the following remarkable tribute was paid by Stirling Kerr, Jr., 33? Deputy for the Inspector-General for the District of Columbia, upon

crowning with laurel the bust of Pike in the House of the Temple: "Pike was an oracle greater than that of Delphi. He was Truth's minister and priest. His victories were those of peace. Long may his memory live in the hearts of the Brethren." Affectionately termed "Albertus Magnus" by his admirers. Pike wrote of Hermeticism and alchemy and hinted at the Mysteries of the Temple. Through his zeal and unflagging energy, American Freemasonry was raised from comparative obscurity to become the most powerfril organization in the land. Though Pike, a transcendental thinker, was the recipient of every honor that the Freemasonic bodies of the world could confer, the modern Mason is loath to admit that transcendentalism has any place in Freemasonry. This is an attitude filled with embarrassment and inconsistency, for whichever way the Mason turns he is confronted by these inescapable issues of philosophy and the Mysteries. Yet withal he dismisses the entire subject as being more or less a survival of primitive superstitions, [pp 413-414]

The Mason who would discover the Lost Word must remember, however, that in the first ages— every neophyte was a man of profound learning and unimpeachable character, who for the sake of wisdom and virtue had faced death unafraid and had triumphed over those limitations of the flesh which bind most mortals to the sphere of mediocrity. In those days the rituals were not put on by degree teams who handled candidates as though they were perishable commodities, but by priests deeply versed in the lore of their cults. Not one Freemason out of a thousand could have survived the initiations of the pagan rites, for the tests were given in those strenuous days when men were men and death the reward of failure. The neophyte of the Druid Mysteries was set adrift in a small boat to battle with the stormy sea, and unless his knowledge of natural law enabled him to quell the storm as did Jesus upon the Sea of Galilee, he retumed no more. In the Egyptian rites of Serapis, it was required of the neophyte that he cross an unbridged chasm in the temple floor. In other words, if unable by magic to sustain himself in the air without visible support, he fell headlong into a volcanic crevice, there to die of heat and suffocation. In one part of the Mithraic rites, the candidate seeking admission to the inner sanctuary was required to pass through a closed door by dematerialization. The philosopher who has authenticated the reality of ordeals such as these no longer entertains the popular error that the performance of "miracles" is confined solely to

Biblical characters. "Do you still ask," writes Pike, "if it has its secrets and mysteries? It is certain that something in the Ancient Initiations was regarded as of immense value, by such Intellects as Herodotus, Plutarch and Cicero. The Magicians of Egypt were able to imitate several of the miracles wrought by Moses; and the Science of the Hierophants of the mysteries produced effects that to the Initiated seemed Mysterious and supernatural." (See Legendafor the Twenty-eighth Degree.) [pp 414-415]

It becomes self-evident that he who passed successfully through these arduous tests involving both natural and also supernatural hazards was a man apart in his community. Such an initiate was deemed to be more than human, for he had achieved where countless ordinary mortals, having failed, had returned no more. Let us hear the words of Apuleius when admitted into the Temple of Isis, as recorded in The Metamorphosis, or Golden Ass: "Then also the priest, all the profane being removed, taking hold of me by the hand, brought me to the penetralia of the temple, clothed in a new linen garment. Perhaps, inquisitive reader, you will very anxiously ask me what was then said and done? I would tell you, if it could be lawfully told; you should know it, if it was lawful for you to hear it. But both ears and the tongue are guilty of rash curiosity. Nevertheless, I will not keep you in suspense with religious desire, nor torment you with long-continued anxiety. Hear, therefore, but believe what is true. I approached to the confines of death, and having trod on the threshold of Proserpine, I retumed from it, being carried through all the elements. At midnight I saw the sun shining with a splendid light; and I manifestly drew near to the Gods beneath, and the Gods above, and proximately adored them. Behold, I have narrated to you things, of which, though heard, it is nevertheless necessary that you should be ignorant. I will, therefore, only relate that which may be enunciated to the understanding of the profane without a crime." [p 415]

Kings and princes paid homage to the initiate—the "newborn" man, the favorite of the gods. The initiate had actually entered into the presence of the divine beings. He had "died" and been "raised" again into the radiant sphere of everlasting light. Seekers after wisdom journeyed across great continents to hear his words and his sayings were treasured with the revelations of oracles. It was even esteemed an honor to receive from such a

one an inclination of the head, a kindly smile or a gesture of approbation. Disciples gladly paid with their lives for the Master's word of praise and died of a broken heart at his rebuke. On one occasion, Pythagoras became momentarily irritated because of the seeming stupidity of one of his students. The Master's displeasure so preyed upon the mind of the humiliated youth that, drawing a knife from the folds of his garment, he committed suicide. So greatly moved was Pythagoras by the incident that never from that time on was he known to lose patience with any of his followers regardless of the provocation.

With a smile of paternal indulgence the venerable Master, who senses the true dignity of the mystic

tie, should gravely incline the minds of the Brethren towards the sublimer issues of the Craft. The officer who would serve his lodge most effectively must realise that he is of an order apart from other men, that he is the keeper of an awful secret, that the chair upon which he sits is the seat of immortals, and that if he would be a worthy successor to those Master Masons of other ages, his thoughts must be measured by the profiandity of Pythagoras and the lucidity of Plato. Enthroned in the radiant East, the Worshipful Master is the "Light" of his lodge—the representative of the gods, one of that long line of hierophants who, through the blending of their rational powers with the reason of the Ineffable, have been accepted into the Great School. This high priest after an ancient order must realize that those before him are not merely a gathering of properly tested men, but the custodians of an eternal lore, the guardians of a sacred truth, the perpetuators of an ageless wisdom, the consecrated servants of a living God, the wardens of a Supreme Mystery, [p 416]

A new day is dawning for Freemasonry. From the insufficiency of theology and the hopelessness of materialism, men are turning to seek the God of philosophy. In this new era wherein the old order of things is breaking down and the individual is rising triumphant above the monotony of the masses, there is much work to be accomplished. The "Temple Builder" is needed as never before. A great reconstruction period is at hand; the debris of a fallen culture must be cleared away; the old footings must be found again that a new Temple significant of a new revelation of Law may be

raised thereon. This is the peculiar work of the Builder; this is the high duty for which he was called out of the world; this is the noble enterprise for which he was "raised" and given the tools of his Craft. By thus doing his part in the reorganization of society, the workman may earn his "wages" as all good Masons should. A new light is breaking in the East, a more glorious day is at hand. The rule of the philosophic elect-the dream of the ages-will yet be realized and is not far distant. To her loyal sons. Freemasonry sends this clarion call: "Arise ye, the day of labor is at band; the Great Work awaits completion, and the days of man's life are few." Like the singing guildsman of bygone days, the Craft of the Builders marches victoriously down the broad avenues of Time. Their song is of labor and glorious endeavor; their anthem is of toil and industry; they rejoice in their noble destiny, for they are the Builders of cities, the Hewers of worlds, the Master Craftsmen of the universe! [p 417]

Rosicrucian and Masonic Origins

by Manly P. Hall

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